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ABSTRACT

The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 was adopted after the Kentucky Supreme Court declared the state's system of schools unconstitutional. The purpose of this study was to identify the sources of information about KERA and to describe community attitudes toward KERA in rural Kentucky school districts during the first few months the law was in effect. The data were gathered in six rural Kentucky school districts using structured interviews, conversations, study of documentary sources, and participant observation. Interviews were conducted with 171 people, including superintendents, central office staff, principals, counselors, teachers, classified employees, school board members, and parents and students. Most respondents were enthusiastic about KERA initiatives that were backed up with funding. They expected to implement KERA faithfully, and saw more factors facilitating than hindering reform. Enthusiasm was highest among those who were best informed about KERA and in districts where the leadership was positive about reform. Most school district professionals and school board members believed themselves to be adequately informed about KERA, while most classified employees, parents, and students did not. Problems in the early phases of implementation include continued funding difficulties and cronyism and patronage in some districts. The appendices include KERA timelines, interview protocols, and state-level contacts who advised researchers. (KS)

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by
Pamelia Coe and Patricia Kannapel

June 1991

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PREFACE

Publication of a study like this is somewhat unusual for an ERIC Clearinghouse. But the events in Kentucky tell us something about the force of education reform nationally. Restructuring entire state systems--even to the point of disestablishment and reestablishment--is possible. Moreover, if the practice of broad reform in Kentucky proves equal to its promise, efforts of similar magnitude in other states may become a certainty.

This study, however, may be unique among reports about future reform efforts, because it directs its primary attention to rural school districts. Those who are concerned about rural education often wonder if reform efforts do as much good as harm in rural America (e.g., Brizius, Foster, & Patton, 1988; Haller & Monk, 1988; Stephens, 1991).

In this light, a principle that applies to student learning probably applies equally well to many rural school districts across the nation. With students, we know that if we raise expectations, we need to "scaffold" activities that support the climb to reach the expectations. Rural schools need similar support to meet raised expectations. Scaffolding such support is critical where the tax base is meager, where poverty is high, and where small size makes expenditures seem high in comparison to statewide averages--conditions that characterize many rural districts.

The Kentucky reforms provide varied opportunities for rural schools to get that support. New funding mechanisms, new systems of support for families, a new approach to early childhood education, and new roles for both the state and local education agencies--all are among those opportunities. Such opportunities, most observers agree, are precursors of a system of accountability that might make sense.

For such reasons as these, the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 may be a source of future lessons for policymakers and educators in all the states. This study, published in collaboration with the State Policy program of the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL), is a firsthand look at what has been begun.

The reforms began with a consensus among superintendents and other leaders in 66 rural school districts that their districts had been denied adequate funding. As in other states, the districts banded together to file a suit that challenged the state's funding formula, and they were as surprised as others when the Kentucky Supreme Court eventually ruled the entire state system of education to be unconstitutional.

Where the reforms will end, no one knows. One thing is sure, however: The reforms target the full gamut of what education does and how it does it. Moreover, the legislation (KERA) resulting from the law suit addresses issues that are of abiding concern to rural educators. These issues, in addition to adequate and equitable funding, include curriculum, professional development, support for at-risk students, and governance.

Kentucky is one of the states served by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory, and when the Supreme Court ruling was announced in June 1990, staff realized that an event of national import was underway there.[1] The Lab immediately put Pam Coe and Patty Kannapel, experienced ethnographic researchers, to work to document what was happening. Their study, reported here, had one main goal: to develop a sense of what the people most intimately affected by the new law in six rural districts--teachers, parents,

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[1]AEL is the host institution for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

students, uncertified staff, administrators, and school board members--were thinking and doing as KERA became a reality.

Coe and Kannapel conclude that the rural people interviewed in these districts generally support the intent of the reforms and want them to succeed. There are questions about implementation, of course, which vary among people interviewed in the six districts where the study took place. But, for the most part, the people interviewed expect substantial benefits; some report that benefits are already in evidence.

-- Todd Strohmenger & Craig Howley
Codirectors, ERIC/CRESS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 1989, the Kentucky Supreme Court handed the state's General Assembly one of the most difficult tasks faced by any state legislature in recent history--to restructure completely the state's system of public schooling. The decision, resulting from a suit filed by 66 of the state's poorest school districts, declared the state's system of schools unconstitutional, not only because it inequitably funded schools, but because it inadequately educated students.

The far-reaching decision set in motion a fast-paced and dramatic redesign of an entire system of education. The Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 was adopted by the General Assembly just nine months after the court decision and was signed into law on April 11, 1990.

The legislation calls for massive changes in the curriculum, governance, and financing of Kentucky's schools. The intent of changes in each of these areas can be described as efforts (a) to instill a new philosophy that all children can learn and that educators are able to ensure all students meet high expectations for learning, (b) to rid the system of political influences, and (c) to achieve equity in funding among districts.

Interested in documenting the implementation of such far-reaching reform, the Appalachia Educational Laboratory sponsored a qualitative research project in six rural Kentucky school districts between August and November, 1990. The purpose of the three-month project was to record the thoughts and feelings of rural Kentucky educators during the first few months of the reform's implementation. This initial project represents the first stage of AEL's documentation and yields baseline information for a five-year, in-depth study that AEL is undertaking in some of the six districts.

Two AEL researchers worked as a team to conduct the project. They each studied three districts, spending about five working days in each. The districts, given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity, are: Central County, East County, Northeast County, Southeast County, West County, and Independent District (a small city district located within a county district).

Interviews were conducted with 171 people, including superintendents, central office staff, principals, counselors, teachers, classified employees, school board members, and, if accessible, parents and students. Given that neither the districts nor the subjects were randomly selected and that the number of people interviewed in any particular district was relatively small, it would be inappropriate to generalize the findings of this study to other Kentucky districts.

What is lost in generalizability, however, is made up in richness of data. The study gives a great deal of information about a range of situations that illustrate the diversity of rural Kentucky school districts.

Several statements of findings can be made about the reform's first few months of implementation.

Respondents generally felt more positive than negative about the reform. In fact, many educators were enthusiastic. As a group, only school board members were more negative than positive. Generally speaking, the best-informed respondents also tended to be the most positive about the reform.

Overall, respondents identified more strengths than weaknesses of KERA. School-based decisionmaking was mentioned most frequently as either a strength or a weakness of the law. Respondents who viewed it as a strength (56%) focused on the increased decisionmaking authority of those closest to the students. When it was seen as a weakness (by 20%), it was primarily because

respondents objected to the mandated composition of local school councils, feared training would be inadequate for successful implementation, or thought that school-based decisionmaking should be voluntary rather than mandatory.

The second most frequently mentioned feature of the law was some aspect of the new finance measures. Whether respondents viewed them as a strength (33%) or a weakness (28%) tended to be specific to particular districts. Respondents who talked positively about the new finance measures mentioned increased funds, the attempt at equalization, and the flow to the district of funds not tied to specific programs. Negative comments about the funding measures often reflected doubt that the state would be able to adequately fund all of the law's provisions. Whereas most respondents supported the intent of equalization, some doubted that the new formula would actually achieve this result. Questions about the fairness of the funding formula were expressed in two districts. One was a primarily agricultural district (where low annual incomes were coupled with high property valuations). In this district, residents felt the community could not raise more local taxes. The other was a district that already taxed citizens at a high rate to support education. Here, residents feared their system would fall behind surrounding districts that would receive large increases in state funding under the provisions of KERA.

While respondents feared a tax revolt in rural Kentucky, no organized opposition to increased taxes had developed in five of the six districts as of October 1990. One county did pass a lower tax increase than the superintendent requested after farmers voiced their opposition to tax increases at a local board meeting.

Most respondents felt that Kentucky schools needed to be rid of political influences, but many in eastern Kentucky felt that the governance measures in KERA aimed at nepotism were not adequate to this task. They felt that cronyism and patronage, not nepotism, were the chief political abuses.

At the time of the study, few concrete effects of the law's implementation were reported. No single effect was named with any great regularity. Some aspects of the reform (each mentioned by fewer than 25% of the respondents) included salary increases, increased funding for the district, nepotism measures, the requirement that fees be waived for at-risk students (a hardship in the two districts that had received the smallest state increases), increased enthusiasm, improved morale, and more involvement in planning activities (also district specific).

Reports of implementation and of planning for implementation were consistent within districts, but they varied across districts. All districts, however, appeared to be implementing those features of the law required for implementation in the fall of 1990. Two districts, nonetheless, appeared to be doing minimal planning for future implementation and offered only the training provided by the state department of education. Districts in which superintendents were enthusiastic about the reform were also those in which (a) additional training opportunities were available to staff and (b) efforts were underway to inform the schools and the general public about the law.

More facilitators than barriers to reform at the school level were identified in all six districts. At the district level, respondents in two districts foresaw difficulties in implementing the reform. In the first, difficulties centered on perceptions of ineffective leadership, political abuses, and a nonsupportive community. In the second, difficulties concerned

perceptions of inadequate staff and other resources, related to its agricultural economy.

Most respondents (70%) believed themselves to be adequately informed about KERA, or as informed as possible, at the time of the study. However, more than half the classified employees, parents, and students felt inadequately informed about the law.

School board members, principals, and superintendents reported fewer and more official sources of information about KERA (professional organizations and state department of education) than did other central office staff, principals, and teachers. Classified employees, parents, and students relied mostly on the media and informal conversations for any information they might have received.

Although respondents were not questioned about the philosophy of the law, they seemed to have a clear understanding of the intent of the governance and finance sections of the law (i.e., ridding the system of political influence and equalization), but most seemed less clear in their understanding of the intent of the curriculum measures. Most respondents discussed the curriculum provisions as a series of separate programs and gave no indication that they were aware of a unifying philosophy behind all of the programs.

A few parents and teachers heartily endorsed the expectation that all children can learn and that schools will no longer be allowed to let some children "fall between the cracks." However, an even larger number of teachers objected to being expected to compensate for all the factors that currently prevent some children from learning.

INTRODUCTION

Education reform has been an issue of national and state concern during the decade of the 1980s, often drawing on effective schools research. Reports like A Nation at Risk (Commission on Excellence, 1983) have focused national attention on the need to improve schools, but with diminishing financial commitment to education at the federal level, state governments have become the major initiators of reform (Fuhrman, 1988).

During 1990, Kentucky became a major focus of the national concern with reform. In response to a state supreme court finding that the entire state school system[2] was unconstitutional, major restructuring of curriculum, governance, and school finance is underway in all of Kentucky. Although education reform is being implemented in other states, Kentucky is undertaking the most massive reforms in the nation.

Rather than mandating specific programs for teachers to implement, KERA follows what some researchers have called the "second wave" of reform, restructuring schooling through decentralization and the professionalization of teaching (Hawley, 1988; Metz, 1988; Conley, 1989; Futrell, 1989; Kerr, 1989; Conley & Bacharach, 1990; Murphy, 1990). The KERA restructuring legislation is a concerted effort to equalize opportunities for Kentucky's school children across all county and independent districts, and to ensure that all children learn problem-solving and life skills at a high level of achievement.

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[2]The state's schools are organized by county, but there are also many independent districts within counties.

Intent of the Study

Made possible by funding earmarked for research and development on rural schools, this study is one of the first efforts to document the effects of mandates for systemic restructuring as such mandates affect rural school districts. Kentucky may be one of the few places in the United States where rural restructuring can be studied systematically, because the entire state educational system is being restructured by mandate.

Many features of the law, however, have not yet taken effect. AEL believes it is important to document how school districts are responding to the law in the early stages of its implementation, in order to identify issues or problems that may have a bearing on how future educational policy will be set in Kentucky. Baseline information will also allow comparison with future developments, as key features of the reform law are successively implemented.

Another important objective of this study is to respond to policymakers' concerns about the design and implementation of important new state-level educational policy. The researchers wanted to know whether or not the conceptions and expectations of KERA held by those with a vested interest in the legislation at the state level--legislators and others--were congruent with the conceptions and expectations of KERA at the local level. Thus, some of the analysis that follows contrasts the reactions of local respondents with the provisions of the law itself, as described by the Legislative Research Commission (Miller, Noland, & Schaaf, 1990).

Because the reform law will, at the outset, primarily affect the resources available to and the behavior and outcomes expected of professional educators, this study concentrates on findings from interviews with teachers,

principals, and central office staff. The researchers, however, also sought out the opinions of parents, students, school board members, and classified (noncertified) staff members.

Education in Kentucky

Kentuckians (including many interviewed for this study) often believe that formal education has been a low priority in the Commonwealth, from the time of its settlement to the present day. Frank McVey (1949), former president of the University of Kentucky, attributes public disinterest in education to the class antagonism that developed early in the state's history, antagonisms that grew as a result of disputes over land ownership. These disputes left the upper class, with better knowledge of politics and law, in possession of the best lands in the state.

This group--the upper class--was instrumental in developing the state's first system of small academies in the late 1700s to prepare their children for the university. Meanwhile, large numbers of landless people--engaged in the trials of day-to-day survival--were left without a system of adequate schooling for their children and without the motivation, need, or time to seek one. The common people, according to McVey,

> were interested only in the titles to their own property, in the opening up of new lands, and in getting on from scratch. Education might be all right for the hoity-toity folk, but not for them. They believed that children in the wilderness could learn more from the everyday tasks of getting food, clothes, and shelter than from books. (McVey, 1949, pp. 10-11)

At least one educator interviewed for this study made a similar comment about the parents he deals with. According to him, they love their children

but feel they themselves have done all right without formal education and do not think their children need it.

Another eastern Kentucky respondent to this survey (an assistant principal at a consolidated high school) also agreed that public attitude is a problem, but attributed much of the public lack of interest in education to the influence of the Civil War. In his view, the original settlers in Kentucky were a literate group, by and large, but he noted that an entire generation in eastern Kentucky went without any schooling at all during the Civil War. This was a period when most people did not go to school for more than four years but, during that time, did learn the "tool skills" (reading, writing, and arithmetic). He felt that people in eastern Kentucky had never again attained the level of literacy they enjoyed before the Civil War.

Evidence that many observers believe this public lack of appreciation for education persists in Kentucky can be found not only in the findings of this study, but in the findings of a recent study of Kentucky policymakers' views on the educational problems of the state (Kannapel 1991) and in the views of native Kentuckian, Kern Alexander. Alexander, who has participated in a number of studies of school finance in Kentucky recently noted:

> There has developed over the generations an institutionalized agrarian distrust for governmental functions and the payment of taxes, especially property taxes. Psychologically, the people [of Kentucky] seem particularly imbued with the childlike disregard for their own best interest and, time and again, have opposed governmental measures that would have given advantage to them and to their children. (Alexander, 1990, p. 13)

During the 1990 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, Kannapel (1991) interviewed policymakers who were working on the education reform law about their perceptions of problems with and solutions for education in Kentucky.

Many legislators identified the basic problem with education as one of public attitude. One, a native of eastern Kentucky, put the problem this way:

> I think it's just kind of a totally...almost contempt for education..."Why do you wanna get an education?", you know, is always a good question. Sometimes it seems like that we have trouble telling people that it would just be a better life if you could understand the evening news. The public does not support the schools; "There's no reason for them, why do we need them? How much education do you need to live off a hillside?" I think that's still prevalent. I don't think it's an east Kentucky problem at all. I think...if you took the 7th and 5th districts [U. S. congressional districts in east and southeast Kentucky] out of Kentucky, you've still got a pretty bad system.... One thing that people need to realize down here is that the...public is not with us in raisin' this massive amount of taxes and reformin' education--they're not with us...there are a lot of us that are gonna commit political suicide. (Kannapel, 1991)

Over the years, the Kentucky economy has not performed well, and many Kentuckians pursue occupations that require little formal education. Kentucky's 1987 per capita personal income of $12,059 ranks 42nd among all states. Over half of the state's population lived in rural areas until 1970, and the state's major economic pursuits during this century have been agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and tourism (Bladen, 1984; National Education Association, 1989).

A recent survey of state spending on education conducted by the National Education Association (NEA) reflects the dual problem of attitude and economy that has plagued the educational system over the years. In the 1988-89 school year, Kentucky ranked 41st in the nation on amount of public school revenue appropriated per pupil and 40th for estimated average salary for public school teachers (NEA, 1989). The NEA survey reveals that Kentucky's local communities bear little relative responsibility for funding education: Kentucky's local governments contributed just 20 percent of all funds to the state's schools. The national average for contributions of local governments to public schools stood at 44 percent, and Kentucky ranked 48th in the nation

on this statistic. The bulk of public school revenue in the state--70 percent--came from state government. The national average for state contributions was 50 percent, and Kentucky ranked 4th in the nation in percentage of revenue contributed by state government to public education (NEA, 1989, pp. 39-41).[3]

In 1952, a constitutional amendment gave the Kentucky General Assembly complete responsibility for school financing. This amendment was an attempt to equalize public school financing throughout the state and, in 1954, resulted in the establishment of the Minimum Foundation Program, a financing program that based funding on the number of students in school. Local districts were required to contribute their share by levying a minimum property tax of $1.10 per $100 of valuation. The program put a mechanism in place for both state and local government to contribute substantial dollars to education. In actual practice, however, property in many school districts was greatly undervalued, so local contributions continued to be low. Moreover, there were large disparities between school districts that were able to raise significant local revenue for education and those that were not.

The Kentucky legislature itself has historically done little to improve the educational situation in the state and has, on occasion, passed legislation that actually blocked increased local funding to schools. For example, in 1965, the Court of Appeals, in order to correct the problem of inadequate local funding, ruled that all property must be assessed at 100 percent of its fair market value. The legislature responded by passing House

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[3]This situation is typical throughout much of the South. Some observers note that comparatively higher levels of state funding to the county systems that predominate in the South have encouraged more effective equalization of funding at the district level than is true in the Northeast, West, or Midwest.

Bill 1--the "rollback law"--which reduced local tax rates to make up for the higher assessments. In 1979, the legislature met in a special session and passed House Bill 44, a measure designed to counter inflation by requiring districts to reduce their property tax rates every year so that current receipts would be no more than four percent higher than those of the previous year. In 1984 and 1985, the legislature passed several of then-Governor Martha Layne Collins' education reform initiatives, but failed to adequately fund a number of others (Jewell & Miller, 1988; Parrish, 1989b; Prichard Committee, 1990).

In 1988, Governor Wallace Wilkinson, with the assistance of his education secretary, Jack Foster, proposed a dramatic school restructuring plan that included a form of school-based decisionmaking, an outcome-based curriculum, professional development centers, and a method of measuring school improvement that rewarded successful schools and intervened in schools that failed to improve (Wilkinson, 1988). Although the Kentucky Senate approved the plan, Wilkinson was unable to arouse sufficient support in the House to win passage of the plan.

History of the Law Suit and Reform

In the past decade, under the pressure of concern over school reform, traditional apathy toward education has begun to disappear in Kentucky. Kentucky's national education rankings have become a topic of discussion among the state's educators, politicians, and the general citizenry. When the National Commission on Excellence in Education published its 1983 report, A Nation at Risk, Kentucky joined the rest of the nation in an outcry for education reform. A number of citizens' groups were formed to study the

problem of education in the state and to make recommendations for improvement. These groups included:

- a task force formed by the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce called the Kentuckians for Excellence in Education Task Force (Kentuckians for Excellence in Education Task Force, 1984);
- the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, a committee initially formed to study higher education (Walker, 1988);
- the Owensboro Citizens Committee on Education (Adkisson, 1989); and
- Forward in the Fifth, an organization formed to study the problems of education in the fifth U. S. congressional district (Smith, 1989).

At nearly the same time these citizens' groups were forming, other action was beginning to take place on a different front. In 1985, representatives from 66 of Kentucky's poorest school districts (including two of the six districts described in this report) formed a nonprofit corporation called the Council for Better Education, Inc., for the purpose of suing the Commonwealth of Kentucky for failing to provide equal educational opportunities throughout the state. The complaint centered on Kentucky's system of financing public schools.

The plaintiffs charged that the system placed too much emphasis on local resources and resulted "in inadequacies, inequities, and inequalities throughout the state so as to result in an inefficient system of common school education in violation of the Kentucky Constitution" (Rose, 1989, p. 4). The precedent for such a law suit had been set in several other states, including California, Arkansas, and New Jersey, but the Kentucky suit differed in that more than one-third of the states' school districts participated (Barwick, 1989; Parrish, 1989a).

This law suit culminated in a dramatic event, which focused the attention of educators across the nation on Kentucky. On June 8, 1989, the Kentucky Supreme Court ruled the state school system unconstitutional and ordered the Kentucky General Assembly to restructure the system completely. Franklin Circuit Court Judge Ray Corns had initially ruled only that Kentucky's school finance system was unconstitutional and that the General Assembly had failed to provide an efficient system of common schools throughout the state; but, when the case was appealed to the state Supreme Court, the entire state school system was ruled unconstitutional. The Kentucky Constitution demands little specific action on the part of the state legislature with regard to the educational system, but does require that it "provide for an efficient system of common schools throughout the state" (Kentucky Constitution, Section 183). The court based its decision on this statement, and Chief Justice Robert F. Stephens stated the ruling clearly:

> Lest there be any doubt, the result of our decision is that Kentucky's entire system of common schools is unconstitutional. There is no allegation that only part of the common school system is invalid, and we find no such circumstance. This decision applies to the entire sweep of the system--all its parts and parcels. This decision applies to the statutes creating, implementing and financing the system and to all regulations, etc., pertaining thereto. This decision covers the creation of local school districts, school boards, and the Kentucky Department of Education, to the Minimum Foundation Program and the Power Equalization Program. It covers school construction and maintenance, teacher certification--the whole gamut of the common school system of Kentucky. (Rose, 1989: p. 66)

Stephens went on to state that it was solely the responsibility of the General Assembly to restructure the system and that this task must be completed by the end of the 1990 legislative session.[4]

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[4]This date was later moved back to July 15, 1990.

The decision came less than seven months before the General Assembly was scheduled to convene its regular biennial 60-day session--a time when the legislature typically takes up all the legislative action that has been developed and discussed during the past two years. The decision left the legislature with less than ten months to develop and win support for a plan to completely restructure the school system. Although there was some initial talk of holding a special session to deal solely with education reform, Governor Wallace Wilkinson--who, as governor, has sole power under the state constitution to call such a session--precluded this by insisting that the budget bill be passed during the regular session. Since it would be nearly impossible to develop the reform plan separately from the budget, the decision was made to deal with both during the regular session.

During the ensuing ten months, the leadership of the General Assembly formed the Task Force on Education Reform and appointed themselves as members with the idea that, if a reform package was to make it through the legislature successfully, the leadership would have to support it. In addition, the governor was asked to appoint some representatives from his office to the task force, again to ensure that all parties would be well represented and supportive of the package. The task force was further subdivided into three committees--curriculum, governance, and finance--and each committee hired a consultant to assist it with the development of reforms for its designated area. The consultants were: for curriculum, David Hornbeck from Hogan and Hartson, Washington, D.C.; for governance, Luvern L. Cunningham and Lila N. Carol from Leadership Development Associates, Alexandria, Ohio; and for finance, John Augenblick from Augenblick, Van de Water Associates, Denver, Colorado.

On March 29, 1990, the legislature passed the most massive education reform bill in the nation, accompanied by a substantial tax increase. The Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 restructured the state's system of school curriculum, governance, and finance in a dramatic way. The bill was signed into law by the governor on April 11, 1990; took effect on July 13, 1990; and is scheduled to be phased in over a six-year period.

Brief Overview of KERA's Main Features

A brief description of its most important features will help the reader understand the results of this study. The substance of the reform law is contained in Volume I of the bill, which is divided into three parts: curriculum, governance, and finance. Each of these sections is summarized below. A comprehensive listing of the timelines of KERA is contained in Appendix A.

Curriculum

Main idea: Schools will be responsible for ensuring that all children are prepared to function well in the sophisticated society in which they will live.

The curriculum section of KERA contains a number of features shaped around a unifying philosophy--the philosophy that all students can achieve at high levels and that, in order to ensure that this achievement occurs, schools should be told only what student outcomes they must produce. It should then be left up to schools as to how to do this, and schools should be held accountable for producing these outcomes. Toward this end, KERA removes all curriculum mandates and adopts instead a list of capabilities that all students will be expected to achieve--capabilities that revolve around the practical application of skills.

To achieve these ends, a number of curriculum components will be phased in incrementally.[5] All schools in the Commonwealth are expected to switch to a self-governance management mode known as school-based decisionmaking (SBDM). Every school will form a council made up of one administrator, three teachers, and two parents who will set school policy to assist teachers in helping students acquire the mandated capabilities. Adoption of SBDM is optional (requiring a two-thirds vote of a school's faculty) until 1996, when it becomes mandatory, but at least one school in each district is required to adopt SBDM in 1991-92.

In order to determine if schools are successful in producing the required outcomes, KERA abolishes the old standardized testing program and mandates the development of a new, performance-based assessment focusing on practical skill application. The new assessment will be administered, on a biennial basis, to a sample of students in each school. Schools will be expected to demonstrate a certain level of improvement in student performance from one testing period to the next, and schools that achieve this level will receive financial rewards. Schools that fail to improve or actually decline in student performance will be sanctioned.

Sanctions could be substantial. At the very least, they would require the school to develop an improvement plan and accept state assistance to implement the plan. At the most, the school would be placed on probation; further, a student transfer provision would allow students from a probationary school to attend the nearest school recognized as successful. A Kentucky Distinguished Educator would be assigned to the school to recommend improvements. Ultimately, this Distinguished Educator could recommend that

[5]See Appendix A for the timetable.

all faculty and administrators be dismissed if improvement is not demonstrated after the probationary period.

In addition to this "outcome-based" component of the curriculum reforms, this section of KERA mandates a number of "inputs" aimed at eliminating student failure. These include preschool programs for "at-risk" and handicapped four-year-olds, social service centers (Family Resource Centers and Youth Services Centers) at or near all schools in which the number of at-risk students is 20 percent or above, a statewide program for utilizing technology in the schools, replacement of grades K-3 with a nongraded primary program (in 1992-93), waiver of school fees for all students eligible for free or reduced lunch, and (beginning in 1990-91) a program of extended educational services for students who need additional time to meet the mandated outcomes. The curriculum section also requires the state to provide a series of professional development programs that focus on specific provisions of KERA, and it requires districts to join professional development consortia to plan professional development activities through the 1994-95 school year.

Governance

Main idea: Political favoritism in the school system must be eliminated.

The governance portion of KERA is the largest of all the sections. It contains a number of features aimed at improving teacher and administrator certification and training, restructuring school governance at the state level, eliminating political abuses at the local level, and monitoring implementation of reform.

In the area of teacher and administrator training, KERA transfers the authority for teacher certification from the state board to a newly created

Education Professional Standards Board. This board has the authority to establish requirements for obtaining and maintaining teaching certificates, evaluate and set standards for teacher preparation programs, and issue and revoke teaching certificates. In addition, KERA sets up an alternative certification program, whereby local districts may seek approval for training programs aimed at certifying persons who are highly skilled in a subject area but who have not completed a teacher education program. The department of education is required to establish regional service centers around the state to assist with professional development of school district employees. KERA also sets up centers for the training and assessment of principals and superintendents (a Superintendents' Training Program and Assessment Center, and a Principals' Assessment Center), and all such administrators are required to complete the assessment center process within a specified period of time.

At the state level, school governance is restructured in a rather drastic way. KERA reconstitutes the State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education, transfers the duties of the elected Superintendent of Public Instruction to the newly created appointive office of Commissioner of Education as of January 1, 1991, and abolishes all positions in the Kentucky Department of Education as of June 30, 1991. The law requires the new Commissioner to reorganize the department on July 1, 1991.

At the local level, KERA contains a number of features aimed at eliminating governance abuses that have been prevalent in many districts around the state--particularly in economically deprived areas where the school system is the largest employer. These measures are directed primarily at preventing nepotism, patronage, and intimidation by local school board members. Specifically, KERA transfers nearly all hiring/firing authority from

local boards to the superintendent and prohibits board members from attempting to influence the hiring of any school employee, with the exception of the superintendent and board attorney.

The local board is still responsible for hiring the superintendent, but it must receive recommendations from a screening committee established for this purpose.[6] The board cannot dismiss a superintendent without obtaining approval from the Commissioner of Education. In addition, persons who have relatives employed by the school district are ineligible to serve on the school board (except in certain limited circumstances). School employees are prohibited from donating to or campaigning for school board candidates, and all local board members must have at least a high school education or GED certificate.

KERA also prohibits superintendents' relatives from being employed in the same district and principals' relatives from being employed in the same school (except in certain limited circumstances), sets up a new procedure for terminating teacher contracts that removes the local board from the process, and permits principals to be demoted more easily.

A final feature of the governance section is the establishment of an independent agency under the legislature--the Office of Education Accountability--to monitor the implementation of the reform act, investigate allegations of wrongdoing, and report to the legislature.

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[6]The board is not bound by these recommendations.

Finance

Main idea: School financing will be equalized.

The finance section of KERA establishes a new funding mechanism, the "Support Education Excellence in Kentucky" (SEEK) fund. This fund provides each district a guaranteed amount of money per pupil, with additional funds allocated to cover the costs of (1) education for "at-risk" and exceptional children and (2) transportation of students. To access SEEK funds, local districts are required to contribute a share by (1) levying a minimum equivalent tax rate of 30 cents per $100 of valuation (35 cents for those districts that elect to participate in the state construction fund) and (2) assessing all property at 100 percent of its fair cash value.

Finally, two provisions allow districts to raise additional local funds, one that includes matching funds from the state and one that does not (Tier I and Tier II funding, respectively). In Tier I funding, local districts may provide up to 15 percent beyond the revenues guaranteed by the state, and the state will match these funds up to a specified level. In Tier II funding, any additional revenue generated at the local level must be approved by popular vote, but will not be matched by the state and cannot exceed a set level.

In sum, SEEK funds, Tier I funding, and Tier II funding mechanisms are designed to equalize education funding throughout the state by providing all districts with equal levels of state assistance, requiring all districts to provide a minimum level of local support, and limiting additional revenue that local districts can generate.

Finally, in addition to this new funding structure, KERA guarantees funding at certain levels and for certain programs for the next two fiscal years. Specifically, all districts will receive an 8 percent to 25 percent

increase in state funding for the 1990-91 school year, and a 5 percent to 25 percent increase for the 1991-92 year, and all programs mandated in the curriculum and governance sections will be properly funded (Kentucky General Assembly, 1990; Miller et al., 1990).

RESEARCH DESIGN

Design Considerations

This survey of initial reactions to the Kentucky Education Reform Act is short-term, qualitative research, with heavy emphasis on structured interviews. This strategy allows researchers to amass as much data as possible in a very limited time frame. The data were gathered in six rural Kentucky school districts--chosen with the help of knowledgeable Kentucky educators--that represented the three major geographic divisions of Kentucky (eastern, central, and western) and exemplified a wide variety of demographic conditions. Five county districts and one very small independent district were studied.

The use of structured interviews allowed researchers to compare data gathered by different field workers in different school districts. Other information, to enrich and help explain the interview data, was gathered at the state level and in the six school districts through conversations, study of documentary sources, and (to an extent more limited than in most ethnographic research) participant observation.

Two staff members, both trained in qualitative research techniques, carried out the survey. The principal investigator, who lives in western West Virginia, spent approximately 80 percent of her work time on the survey for three and a half months (mid-August through November 1990) and studied three school districts in eastern Kentucky. The second investigator, who lives in central Kentucky, spent 100 percent of her work time for the same period on the project and studied districts in southeastern, central, and western Kentucky. The two researchers carried out jointly all state-level interviews

and the initial interviews in school districts. They consulted with each other frequently, even after they had divided up the responsibilities for data collection to allow each to study the districts closest to her home.

Before beginning intensive study of the six districts, the two researchers met with 17 people at the state level to inform them that the study was to be conducted, make sure the effort would not duplicate other studies, and get advice about what sorts of information would be useful to them. They met with two key legislators, four Kentucky Department of Education staff members, the secretary of education and the humanities, two university representatives, five staff members of a major professional organization (the Kentucky Education Association [KEA]), and three representatives of state and regional private agencies devoted to the improvement of Kentucky education (the Prichard Committee and Forward in the Fifth).

These people, who were all enthusiastic about the enactment of KERA, shared their major concerns about the reform act and what they wanted to learn from the study.[7] Many of their suggestions were incorporated into the survey design. For instance, AEL had originally intended to study only eastern Kentucky school districts (because they are more accessible to the AEL office in West Virginia), but central and western Kentucky districts were added after KDE staff emphasized the value of comparative data from the three regions of Kentucky, since they differ greatly from one another as well as from the one large metropolitan area, Louisville.

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[7]For a list of the individuals interviewed at the state level, see Appendix C.

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the study was to obtain in-depth understanding of (1) the sources of information about KERA and (2) the attitudes toward KERA held by educators in rural Kentucky school districts during the first few months the law was in effect. This information provides baseline data to inform a five-year study in some of the districts described here that will follow the full local implementation of KERA.

The six districts chosen for study contrast with each other on a number of dimensions: geographic location, size of district, relative prosperity, and local attitudes toward the school system. An effort was made to gather the information quickly, before most aspects of KERA had been implemented and before attitudes toward KERA could harden. As noted earlier, the study was designed to meet the needs of several audiences, including policymakers, educators and others involved in the school system, and students of educational change efforts both in the state of Kentucky and across the nation.

Research Questions

The survey was designed to answer the following set of research questions:

- To what extent are school district respondents receptive to KERA?
- What have been the primary sources of information on KERA for school district respondents, and are respondents satisfied with the level of information they have received?
- On what features of KERA are respondents focusing, and to what features are they most receptive and least receptive?

- How has KERA affected school district respondents, and what steps have schools and districts taken toward implementation of KERA to date?

- What factors are identified by school district respondents as likely to facilitate or hinder reform in their own districts?

- What are the limitations on school districts' will and capacity to implement state policy as intended by the policymakers? For instance, can local districts accurately identify the technical assistance they need to carry out the required changes, and do they have access to that technical assistance? What is the capacity of KDE and state institutions of higher education to provide the necessary technical assistance in timely fashion, given the tight deadlines specified in the legislation? Such questions cannot be answered on the basis of this study, but indications in the data are discussed.

Implementation of Study

Selection of Districts for Study

The six districts were chosen for study based on recommendations from Kentucky educators and policymakers, logistics of travel, and the desire to include a range of demographic, economic, geographical, and other conditions. They included five county districts and one independent district, as noted previously: Central County, East County, Northeast County, Southeast County, West County, and Independent District.

The districts varied widely in their characteristics. Two were relatively wealthy for rural Kentucky districts, one was extremely poor, and three were well below the state average in both tax base and assessed property value per pupil, which ranged from around $49,000 to about $149,000. The state average, however, is $158,257. Based on standardized testing, one district was extremely successful academically, one was extremely unsuccessful, and the other four were somewhere in the middle. The percentage of students in each district who were classified as economically deprived

ranged from near 29 percent to about 70 percent. This compares to a state average of 38.9 percent (Kentucky Department of Education, 1990). Two of the six districts were among the 66 litigants in the school funding suit.

Enrollment in the six districts ranged from 950 to 4,300, with an average enrollment of 2,858. The number of schools in each district ranged from 2 to 12, with an average of 7. The average number of employees in the districts was 332, with a range from about 100 to about 500.

The independent district had a history of high local taxation in support of the schools, but four of the five county districts had a history of limited resources and strong local resistance to taxation. Two of the eastern Kentucky districts had received state assistance to overcome deficiencies.[8]

Creation of Interview Protocols

The researchers designed a set of interview protocols to be used with different role groups in each district. Questions were intended to throw maximum light on the research questions listed above. The full text of these protocols can be found in Appendix B.

Conduct of Interviews and Observations

After the six districts had been selected, each of the two researchers took responsibility for all the field work in the three districts most convenient to her home. The first visit to each district was for the purpose of interviewing the superintendent and other key central office staff, as well as making arrangements for the remaining interviews and observations in the district.

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[8]One of these districts has since shown considerable improvement as a result of state assistance, but the other continues to be troubled.

The investigators tried to arrange interviews with the following people in each school district: (1) central office staff, including the superintendent, at least one instructional supervisor, the exceptional child supervisor where available, and any others recommended by the superintendent; (2) two or three school board members; and (3) staff of each visited school (including the principal, assistant principal and/or counselor where possible), at least two teachers (including some special education teachers in each district), at least one classified employee, and parents and students when available.

Parents, students, and community members were not specifically targeted for this study because it was felt that district employees and leaders would be more easily accessible to the researchers in the limited time available. Each superintendent nominated two or three schools for study (an elementary, middle, and high school except in districts with only two levels of school). Researchers arranged to spend a full day in each school the superintendent nominated.

The researchers also attended key district meetings that occurred during the month or two they worked intensively with each district. In most districts, they had the opportunity to attend a board of education meeting and a meeting of an elementary parent-teacher organization (PTO) or parent-teacher association (PTA). In addition, one researcher attended the all-day professional development session on school-based decisionmaking offered through KET (the state's educational television channel) to all the schools in Kentucky. She also attended one day of the two-day "Primary School Institute" (focusing on the nongraded primary feature of KERA) offered by the state department of education to selected participants from each district.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the interview data on which this report is primarily based was both inductive and comparative. A set of relatively objective concepts was derived from the Legislative Research Commission's Guide to the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (Miller et al., 1990) and the text of KERA itself. These categories were then compared with categories derived inductively from the interview data. In addition, for most of the questions asked, a list of responses was compiled and overall results charted. These responses were then broken down by district and role group in order to determine if there were any relevant differences in these two areas.

Cautions on Interpretation of Data Presented in This Report

Neither districts nor interview subjects were chosen randomly, so it would be inappropriate to attempt to generalize the findings of this study to other Kentucky districts. For the same reason, the researchers have not attempted an inferential statistical analysis of the findings. The analysis, however, attempts to make up in richness of data what is lost in generalizability. The study provides a great deal of information about a range of situations, to illustrate something of the diversity of rural Kentucky school districts and the implications of these differences for implementation of KERA.

There is a bias in the selection of respondents to the survey. Superintendents and some principals clearly chose the schools or respondents they considered their "best" for the researchers to study. Since the six superintendents had rather different attitudes toward KERA themselves, it may be surmised that they may have used different criteria in selecting their

"best" schools. Similarly, some principals exercised considerable control over the staff the researchers interviewed, while others exercised little or no control. Since the researchers were not in any of the districts long enough to overcome the natural tendency to conceal from outsiders anything that might be considered negative, the survey probably overestimates the number of district employees who are enthusiastic about implementing KERA.

Readers should note, however, that even in districts where the superintendent expressed a generally negative stance toward KERA and in schools where the principal was generally negative, at least some respondents expressed a degree of enthusiasm for the reform that would have been difficult to simulate. The study generated several clear and unmistakable findings and these findings are highlighted in the discussion that follows.

FINDINGS

Receptivity to KERA

The researchers judged overall receptivity to the reform law as more positive than negative, but noted that a substantial number of people in some districts felt ambivalent about the mandated changes. School board members represented the only group that was more negative than positive. Some discussed the governance revisions mandated by the law as particularly objectionable.

Table 1

Overall Receptivity to KERA

Rating	Percent of Respondents
Generally positive	31%
More positive than negative	23%
Equally weighted between positive and negative	25%
More negative than positive	10%
Generally negative	2%
Too uninformed to make a judgment	9%

Respondents in Central and East counties had the most positive reactions. Researchers noted that the superintendents and central office staff in these two districts were reacting favorably to KERA, providing training activities and encouraging school district personnel to become enthused about the law. Reactions in Independent District were more evenly split between positive and negative than in the other five districts. Many respondents there felt that the reform was not needed or particularly beneficial to their district. The district superintendent commented:

> The law itself is not designed to help districts such as ours that have been helping themselves for years. For example, we have already purchased computers for our high school. As I understand it, there's going to be a technology program for those districts that haven't purchased computers, but that won't help us. Our people tax themselves considerably to have quality education, and we don't get nearly as much money per pupil [increase] because of our local wealth and local taxation as compared to other districts. The entire reform act is not geared to help small, independent districts.

The researchers found that the best-informed respondents, on the whole, tended to have the most positive attitudes toward the reform bill. A West County teacher, discussing her views on school-based decisionmaking, described how increased knowledge can lead to a more positive attitude:

> When I very first heard about it, I thought, "Oh, brother!" But then... I heard other teachers from other districts talk about it [at a Kentucky Education Association workshop], that already had implemented [it], and how much better the morale is. I think teacher morale is a big influence on the way you teach.... But, when I first heard about it, I just didn't know enough about it to know. The first reaction for most people, when they hear about something they don't know anything about is, "No." But, after you hear about it and realize that people are doing it and it is working, what have we got to lose? I'm not happy with what we have now.

Strengths and Weaknesses of KERA

When respondents were asked to identify the strong and weak points of KERA, more strengths than weaknesses were named.

Table 2

Strengths of KERA

Feature	Percent Identifying Feature as a Strength
School-based decisionmaking	56%
Financing	33%
Increased involvement of parents, teachers, community	18%
Nongraded primary	16%
Assessment program	14%
Political measures	14%
Removal of curriculum mandates	12%
At-risk preschool	10%

Overall, the most frequently cited strength was school-based decisionmaking. Respondents who identified this as a strong feature focused on the increased decisionmaking authority of those who are closest to students, i.e., principals, teachers, and parents. One teacher commented:

> Well, I like the...site-based management part, where [teachers] are going to have more input [with] the principal and the parents, rather than the board. Most of the board members, they are not people [who] have been in the classroom teaching, and I think to make decisions concerning the school system you need somebody with experience.... I just don't see how anybody that hasn't worked with children and hasn't been in the school system can set up guidelines that are practical to be used in the classroom. I think it needs to be more involved with the teachers, principals, and parents.

School-based decisionmaking was the most frequently cited strength in all six districts, but respondents in Independent District listed this as a strength much less often than in other districts. Respondents there believed the district had included parents and teachers in decisionmaking for years. One of the principals summed up the district's apparent position this way:

> We do expect to make some changes. We haven't made a lot of changes up to this point. In the last five years, our school has ranked very high in statewide testing.... I always believed that, if you don't have a problem, there's no reason to change. Now, the new reform bill will cause us to make some changes. But we've always had success, and we have a very dedicated faculty, and I think that's number one. If you have good teachers, everything will fall in place.

Those who identified the new funding formula as positive tended to do so because they were happy with the increased funding, the attempts at equalization, and the fact that funds will now come to the districts without being earmarked. Southeast County, the poorest district studied, had the highest percentage of respondents who identified the new funding program as a strength.

Table 3

Weaknesses of KERA

Feature	Percent Identifying Feature as a Weakness
Inadequate funding, unfair funding formula	28%
School-based decisionmaking	20%
Assessment program	17%
Ineffective governance measures	15%
Inadequate professional development/rushed timelines	14%
Lack of guidelines for implementation	12%
Shifting of authority from school board to superintendent	10%

Overall, respondents identified relatively few weaknesses of KERA. The most frequently cited weakness was the new funding formula, but respondents in the six districts had different reasons for identifying this as a weakness. In Central County, over half of the respondents feared that funding for education reform would be inadequate in future years. West County respondents felt the new funding formula placed too much of a financial burden on their primarily agricultural district. A West County board member explained:

> We're not a rich county, we're a rural county. Our people are not rich; we don't have much, if any, industry; and our tax base, we really couldn't raise it. We tried it a few years ago and put it on the ballot, and the voters turned down a tax increase.... If we had been able to raise the money ourselves to do all these things that we need to do, we wouldn't have needed to ask the state for more money, for more help. We wouldn't even have joined that law suit.

In Central and West counties--districts that did not receive large increases in state funding like the three eastern county districts in the study--many respondents complained about the KERA provision that school fees be waived for at-risk students. Teachers in Central and West counties reported having difficulty meeting classroom-level expenses, since the districts used these funds to provide basic materials. Respondents in the other four districts didn't mention the fee waivers as a problem.

Independent District respondents reacted negatively to the new funding formula because the district's already high tax rate caused it to receive a relatively small increase in state funding. One classified employee commented:

> I wish they'd given the independents a little more.... I think they penalized the people for attempting to do a good job over the years. Our tax rate is higher than the county system's, but we're going to fall behind them ....

Respondents who identified school-based decisionmaking as a weakness tended to do so because they were unhappy with some aspect of implementation--primarily, the mandated composition of the school council, the fear that school councils will not receive adequate training, or the fact that school-based decisionmaking is mandatory.

For example, a parent in West County expressed the view that, while teachers may be empowered by school-based decisionmaking, the process for implementing it disempowers parents:

> Two-thirds of the faculty have to vote if they want [school-based decisionmaking] or not. Where's the parent part? Parents are supposed to be involved with this, and, if you have a school full of teachers who say, "Why should we fool with this now; let's wait until the very last," and the PTA feeling is, "Let's start now and by 1996 it will be working".... The state rewards schools that are making achievements in this... so I do disagree with the two thirds of the faculty approving.

Those who identified the new assessment program as a weakness focused on the rewards and sanctions plan and on the idea of basing school success on the assessment of a random sample of students. Principals and teachers, in particular, were unhappy with the new method of accountability, although most expressed support for the concept of accountability. Opinions, however, demonstrated a range of feelings:

> I don't like the performance--I'm not sure how to say it--performance testing. When you put a child in an eighth grade science class, [and] he reads on a, maybe, second grade level, and expect me to be responsible for him? No, that's not right.... For the performance, there's a whole lot of other factors that go into it other than the teachers. In my classes and in all the classes that I know anything about, the material is there and it's presented, and if the child comes to school hungry, it's not my fault. If the child doesn't have enough up here, it's not my fault. And if he's just too damned ornery to do anything, that's not my fault either. The parent needs to be responsible for that.

Reflect this against the opposite view expressed by another teacher:

> Another thing that hit me was the evaluation of teachers and of the students. We can walk around, even in our building, and see there are people who don't put forth all the effort they should with the students; and I'm judging--maybe they are getting the point across to the students better than I do. But it seems to me they sit and let the students do, and maybe this will help; maybe this will light a fire under them. They'll find out they have got to do a little something.

In the same vein, a board member noted:

> I've been on the board long enough [to know] that you get frustrated when you have people that you know are not doing the job, and it was next to impossible to get rid of anyone like that. You really had to have the goods and witnesses and everything. So now, if they don't produce, we can eliminate those types of people. That's a positive move if it works, and the big question is "if."

Respondents who identified the governance measures as weak generally agreed with the intent of the changes but doubted that they would be effective in eliminating political abuses in the system. In fact, respondents in the four districts affected by the nepotism measures did not feel that nepotism had been a problem in their district. Many expressed regret that affected board members would be prevented from holding office.

Although a small percentage of respondents overall cited governance measures as a weakness, half of the respondents in Southeast County felt this way. Respondents reported that their district has been plagued by political abuse for years. They viewed the district's political problems as resulting from cronyism rather than nepotism and reported that the nepotism measures had not affected board membership; no board members had been removed from office as a result of the new law.

In general, many eastern Kentucky respondents expressed concern that the nepotism measures would remove quality employees from service in their home counties. A Southeast County principal said:

> Eastern Kentucky is being depleted of its population, and I feel like the people that are leaving are the quality people. The people that are educated are going to find better jobs, and when you restrict and say that a superintendent's relatives cannot work in the system and a principal's relatives cannot work in a certain school, then you are discouraging them from bringing their skills back home.... Many times those of us who are in education and those of us who are in vital roles are the ones who see the importance of sending our children off to college and getting them an education and--when they are told they cannot go back home--it's going to further encourage them not to.

School board members and superintendents identified the measures designed to eliminate political abuses as a weakness of KERA more frequently than any other role group. One board member remarked:

> One of the biggest problems I see with it [KERA] is that they've taken the public out of it. I don't think the public is going to have much say on what happens in education, because normally their voice is through the board members; they've really lost that. You don't know where to go because you don't have any clout, and I think the public will suffer for that. I think they should put a little more power back to the board.

Impact of KERA on Respondents

Few respondents indicated that KERA had affected them in any concrete way at the time the study was conducted. No single effect was cited by as many as one-fourth of the respondents. Many respondents reported involvement in professional development and planning to implement the law. The major concrete effects of KERA mentioned were salary increases, named in all six districts; loss of board members due to the nepotism measures, named in four districts; and loss of fee money from at-risk students, mentioned as a negative impact in two districts.

Other effects of KERA mentioned by respondents differed somewhat by district. Southeast and Central counties were the only districts in which

large numbers of respondents (nearly one-half) mentioned increased enthusiasm and improved morale in their districts as a result of the passage of KERA, but the reasons for this increased enthusiasm differed in the two districts.

Southeast County respondents were hopeful that the reform would help eliminate political abuses and empower local schools to act in the best interest of their students. In addition, Southeast County teachers reported that they had united for the first time to negotiate a salary increase. They said success in this endeavor had both raised morale and made them feel empowered. In Central County's first inservice of the year, the superintendent spoke highly of the opportunity that KERA presented for the district. A team of consultants was brought in by the district to conduct presentations and discussion groups on various aspects of the law. In addition, the district obtained a grant to conduct intensive training for the high school faculty on school-based decisionmaking, and staff members there commented that the workshop had ignited teachers' enthusiasm for the first time in years.

In Independent District, comments about the effects of KERA were less positive. About one-fourth of the respondents there commented that the district was penalized by the new funding formula. In reality, the district had received an increase in state funding, but respondents were dismayed that the surrounding county districts had received a much larger funding increase than they had. They perceived this as a penalty for being a "good district" and taxing themselves heavily all along.

Implementation of KERA

All districts appear to be implementing those features of the law required for implementation during the fall of 1990. Three of the six districts had already begun the preschool program; the others were waiting until the 1991-92 school year due to lack of space. All districts were offering kindergarten every day as mandated by KERA, and all were at least planning for extended school services; some had already begun the program.

All districts except Independent, which already had the highest local tax rate of the six districts, had stated their intent to increase the local tax rate. All districts also had granted at least the minimum salary increase. All of the boards of education had either already adopted a school-based decisionmaking policy or were working on one and expected to meet the January 1, 1991, deadline.

The districts differed somewhat in the amount of long-range planning for future implementation. The superintendent in East County had assigned one central office administrator the fulltime task of overseeing reform implementation and of planning staff development and public information sessions on the law. Similarly, the superintendent in Central County had assigned each central office administrator a KERA topic for study and had instructed each to convene a committee of teachers, principals, and parents to study the issue and help the district prepare for reform implementation. Northeast County had obtained a grant that gave all district teachers the opportunity to participate in school-specific curriculum development to prepare for KERA implementation.

In Southeast County, by contrast, there was little indication that the district was conducting any sort of study or planning beyond that offered by

the state department. And in West County, the superintendent expressed an awareness of the need to approach implementation more aggressively, but was frustrated by a lack of staff. The district has only three central administrators including the superintendent. They reported having their hands full even before KERA was passed. Independent District exhibited little evidence of advance planning. Respondents there commented that the district's small size and excellent staff would make it easy to implement the reforms.

Perceived Facilitators or Barriers to Reform

Respondents were asked if anything about their districts or schools might make the implementation of KERA especially easy (facilitators) or difficult (barriers). In all six districts, more facilitators than barriers were identified at the school level. The outlook was also positive at the district level in four of the six districts. The one district where respondents seemed to feel the most positive about the district's ability to implement reform was Independent. There, respondents believed they already had an excellent district and that KERA was instituting strategies they had already adopted.

Many respondents expressed the view that either ineffective or nonsupportive administrators would act as barriers to change, while supportive and high-quality administrators would facilitate reform implementation. A central office administrator in East County described how she believes the superintendent's attitude will facilitate reform in the district:

> I think our administration at the top will make it as easy as possible, probably a lot easier than a lot of districts will have it, because we have a very innovative superintendent. He's great as far as trying to implement things, and he doesn't want East County to be on the bottom of anything. If we come out on the bottom, we'll all have to work a little harder. And

> he inspires motivation by being the way he is, by working as he does. And he inspires motivation on the part of the administrative staff in here, and even on the part of the teachers. I think site-based management, on the whole, will go over well in this county because he's not opposed to it. Some counties, you know, the administration is opposed to it, and it's going to cause a problem.

A teacher in Southeast County explained how ineffective leadership might hinder reform implementation:

> I think as far as difficult, there is a lack of communication between the central office and each school. There is definitely a gap there, and that would be the biggest problem. It seems to me that they expect us to just know these things: "Do this" and they expect us to do it without explaining what it is they want. I think they need to be more involved in each school. They need to come up and be involved in the program instead of sitting back and letting each school do it on their own.... I feel like they are just sitting back and letting it happen instead of making it happen.

Support by parents and the community was also seen as critical to successful reform implementation. Respondents who believed the community to be supportive of education identified this as likely to facilitate reform, while those who viewed the community or parents as unsupportive identified this as a barrier. A Central County teacher had this comment to make about the Central County community:

> The positive attitude from the public about the utility tax was an indication that the taxpayers of this district support the reform, and that is going to help us implement the reform. That's important.

The superintendent in Southeast County described how a nonsupportive community can present a problem to reform implementation:

> I really can't see anything that would be easy.... We have people who grew up around here--some people didn't get to go to school or they quit school when they were in the third grade or fourth grade. They have done well, they've raised their kids, and they don't see any value in [formal] education. They say, "I've done good with a fifth-grade education, and my kids should be able to, too." They don't see any value. It's not that they don't love their kids; it's just that they don't see

> why their kids should have to have an education. They have those children 18 hours a day and we have them six, so it's hard. That's what we're working against in Southeast County. We can't educate the parents; we've got to educate the children to see the value in education, and it's a long process.

Another factor identified as a facilitator of reform was the advance implementation of various programs or strategies contained in or consistent with KERA. This factor was found in schools where respondents reported they had used some form of school-based decisionmaking for years or had already begun to change the curriculum focus to critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.

Many of the identified barriers to reform were specific to districts. Respondents in Northeast and Central counties--the two geographically largest districts in this study--felt that their size would make reform implementation more difficult because of poor communication, transportation problems, and diverse interests within the district. Respondents in the two smallest districts--Independent and West--viewed their size as likely to facilitate reform.

Respondents in Southeast County commented that the long history of political abuse in the district would act as a barrier to reform implementation. One teacher remarked:

> It could be difficult because of the working together of board members and the superintendent. I feel like we have a superintendent that will do the work if the board members will get behind him and forget past grievances. And I don't think our county is any different than others--I'm not saying it is any more political--but I think that could make it difficult if they don't agree what needs to be done.

A large number of respondents in West County felt the agriculturally based economy would make reform especially difficult. West County respondents reported that, while the district's assessed property value per pupil is

relatively high (nearly $140,000, compared to less than $50,000 in Southeast County), farmland does not produce large incomes. The district received a relatively small increase in state funding (just over the minimum 8 percent increase mandated by KERA) because of its high property values and low percentage of at-risk students, yet the district is not wealthy, and local farmers understandably resist higher property taxes. One school board member described the problem:

> We still have several [fulltime farmers] here, and several of them just operate on a shoestring. You throw another couple thousand dollars a year, maybe more, taxes on them, sometimes that could be enough to break them.

Sources of Information

Respondents used a variety of sources of information about KERA, with media named most often.

Table 4

Major Source of Information on KERA

Source	Percent Identifying Source
The media (newspaper and television news)	46%
Professional organizations	42%
Kentucky Department of Education	34%
District inservice	22%
Informal conversations	15%
Legislative Research Commission	11%
Kentucky Educational Television broadcast of the legislative sessions	10%

Role groups exhibited a marked difference in their sources of information on KERA. Except for central office staff, school district leadership (school board members, superintendents, and principals) tended to draw on a limited number of sources (primarily the state department of education and professional organizations). Central office administrators (other than the superintendent), counselors, and teachers drew from a wider variety of sources. Classified employees, parents, and students had often not received much information on KERA, and of those who had, the media and informal conversations were named most often.

Adequacy of Information

The vast majority of respondents (70%) believed themselves to be either well-informed about the law or as well-informed as possible at the time of the study. Twenty-five percent--primarily classified employees, parents, and

students--believed themselves to be inadequately informed. Five percent responded in less clear-cut ways.

Over 80 percent of the respondents in Central and East counties felt adequately informed about KERA. Few respondents in either district described themselves as inadequately informed. In the other four districts, about one-third of the respondents felt inadequately informed.

Most Mentioned Aspects of KERA

The most frequently mentioned feature of KERA was school-based decisionmaking; some aspect of the new financing measures was the next most frequently mentioned feature. Respondents seemed to be focusing on those features of the law that immediately affected them or that were being implemented early in the phase-in of the reform.

Table 5

KERA Features Mentioned by Respondents

Feature	Percent Discussing Feature in Some Context
School-based decisionmaking (SBDM)	78%
New financing procedures/methods	51%
Nongraded primary program	33%
New assessment program for students/schools	30%
Political measures	30%
Greater parent/teacher involvement in decisionmaking	13%
Extended school services	11%
Loss of school board authority	11%
Increase in superintendent authority	11%

Features of KERA that were not mentioned by any respondent in any context were the interim testing program, the preschool program for handicapped

children, reorganization of the state department of education, limits on contributions to school board campaigns, the establishment of an Office of Education Accountability to monitor implementation of KERA, and the upper limit on local school district taxation.

CONCLUSION

After almost a decade of school reform in Kentucky, most respondents were enthusiastic about a package of state initiatives that were backed up with funding, expected to implement KERA faithfully, and saw more factors facilitating than hindering reform. Enthusiasm was highest both among those who were best informed about KERA and in districts where the leadership was positive about reform and was simultaneously taking the initiative to provide additional training beyond that mandated by KERA. It appears, therefore, that the level of enthusiasm and initiative being demonstrated by the district leadership directly affected district staff.

Most school district professionals and school board members believed themselves to be adequately informed about KERA. Most classified employees, parents, and students did not.

Analysis of respondents' identification of KERA's strengths and weaknesses also indicates the need for increased information about the changes, for both certified and classified employees. In discussing the governance and finance measures of the reform law, respondents seemed to have a clear understanding of the <u>intent</u> of these measures (i.e., ridding the system of political influence and equalization). If they cited any aspect of these measures as a weakness, their reasoning was usually based on the perception that the measures would not achieve their intent. Respondents appeared to be less clear in their understanding of the intent of the curriculum measures. They focused more on individual aspects of the curriculum section and had less tendency to view these measures as a cohesive whole, with all the component parts aimed at achieving a single goal.

A few respondents discussed the need to prepare for the massive changes in assessment and instructional strategies required by the new focus on student outcomes and emphasis on problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. Overall, however, it appeared that respondents were struggling to understand the law and implement the most immediate requirements rather than planning for the major philosophical and behavioral changes that KERA will require.

The six districts appear to differ in their capacity to implement KERA as intended by policymakers. While all are currently on track, a couple of districts appear to be having great difficulty planning for future reforms, even those required within the next year. In addition, many employees, school board members, and parents in the one independent district were disgruntled because they felt the funding formula penalized their district for having supported the schools financially in the past.

Three other problems appearing in the early phases of implementation bear mentioning. First, even though most of the districts were receiving at least an 8 percent increase in state funding under the new formula, KERA appeared to be causing real financial problems for at least two of the districts. In Central and West counties, which received the smallest increases, the waiver of fees for at-risk students was creating difficulties. In eastern Kentucky, the county districts were all receiving close to the 25 percent maximum increase in state funding. Only one eastern Kentucky respondent mentioned the loss of fee income, saying that the school's overall discretionary funding had increased in spite of the loss.

Second, farmland assessment may be leading to a misinterpretation of a school district's ability to support education; the district may be property

rich but income poor, as in West County.[9] Moreover, declining land values in recent years, coupled with outdated valuations of farmland, may be compounding this problem throughout much of rural Kentucky.

Third, respondents were confident in their view about the inability of the nepotism provisions to address the real political problem--cronyism and patronage. They described instances where individuals are being removed from school boards and school staffs when there is no evidence that these individuals are more guilty of favoritism than individuals whose positions were not affected by the nepotism provisions.

In closing, the researchers found little deep-rooted opposition to KERA in these six districts, and many educators were enthusiastic about the reform. Although many respondents expressed fear that KERA would lead to a tax revolt in rural Kentucky, none had developed during the fall of 1990, although local farmers had been successful in one district in keeping the local tax increase as low as possible.

Finally, since the best informed respondents appeared to be the most enthusiastic, community and parent education may be critical to the successful implementation of KERA. The need to address this task is evident: citizens are being asked to pay higher taxes at both the state and local levels. Several candidates for state level offices have begun to call for a tax rollback. Although no severe political backlash had yet occurred at the time of the study, the tax increase <u>has</u> become an issue in political campaigns.

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[9]The tendency to peg measures of fiscal effort to property values rather than income has been repeatedly cited in the literature on rural education as detrimental to rural districts (e.g., Thompson, Honeyman, & Wood, 1989; Tompkins, 1977; Stephens, 1991). Such observers as these note that, when measured against income, rural districts generally show a high level of fiscal effort.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

KERA Timelines

APPENDIX A: KERA TIMELINES

Effective Date	Provision	Responsible Party	Affected Party	Part	Section
Oct 1, 1989	Local equivalent tax rate (up to 15% of SEEK) for 1990-91 school year must have been levied.	School boards	Taxpayers, schools	Finance	107
Dec. 31, 1989 (tax years beginning after this date)	Corporate tax increases by 1%.	Corporations	Corporations, schools	Revenue	629
Dec. 31, 1989 (tax years beginning after this date)	Low-income tax credit is established.	Taxpayers	Taxpayers	Revenue	638
June 30, 1990 (School years beginning after this date)	Local boards must levy a minimum equivalent tax rate.	Local boards	Taxpayers/schools	Finance	105
July 1, 1990 (School years beginning after this date).	Local boards may levy an additional tax which will raise up to 15% beyond guaranteed SEEK funding, and the state will match these funds for most districts.	Local boards/the state	Taxpayers/schools	Finance	107
July 1, 1990	Sales tax increases to 6%.	Retailers	Consumers/ schools	Revenue	617-621
July 13, 1990	Council on School Performance Standards (CSPS) to reconvene to frame six goals in measurable terms for defining student outcomes.	Chairman of CSPS	Schools, students	Curriculum	2
July 13, 1990	Interagency Task Force on Family Resource Centers and Youth Services Centers is created, and is to begin meeting immediately to begin formulating its 5-year plan for establishing these centers.	Governor	Families, students	Curriculum	18
July 13, 1990	Council for Education Technology is created to develop a long-range plan for use of technology in the schools.	Governor	Schools, students	Curriculum	21
July 13, 1990	The Kentucky Early Childhood Advisory Council is created to advise the chief state school officer on implementation of early childhood education programs.	Governor/State Board chairman	Preschools	Curriculum	15

Effective Date	Provision	Responsible Party	Affected Party	Part	Section
July 13,1990	School-based decision making to be implemented at any school in which 2/3 of the faculty vote to do so.	School faculties (permissive)	School staff	Curriculum	14
July 13, 1990	State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education to contract with three or more performance assessment authorities, who will design specifications and review bids for the development of the interim and full-scale assessment measures.	State Board	Schools, students	Curriculum	4
July 13,1990	State Board to establish criteria for alloting grants to school districts for the 1990-91 and 1991-92 school years to provide continuing education to students who need it.	State Board	Schools, students	Curriculum	27
July 13, 1990	State Board to initiate a program to assist and encourage teachers to purchase personal computers.	State Board	Teachers	Curriculum	23
July 13, 1990	New class size limits set for schools not participating in school-based decision making.	--------	Schools	Finance	97
July 13, 1990	New category of experience added to the classification of teachers for salary purposes.	Chief state school officer	Teachers	Finance	99
July 13, 1990	The Kentucky Successful Schools Trust Fund is established to issue payments of rewards to successful schools.	Finance Cabinet	Schools	Finance	103
July 13, 1990	Local boards may increase revenue an additional 30% if the voters approve, but this will not be matched by the state.	Local boards	Taxpayers, schools	Finance	107
July 13, 1990	Local boards may add cable TV to the list of utilities which are taxed under a utility tax.	Local boards	Taxpayers, schools	Finance	115
July 13, 1990	The Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) fund replaces the Public School Foundation Program Fund as the fund which ensures a guaranteed minimum level of state funding to local districts.	--------	Local districts	Finance	95
July 13, 1990	New State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education is established.	Governor/ General Assembly	--------	Governance	35
July 13, 1990	Education Management Selection Commission is created to select the first Commissioner of Education.	Governor/Senate President Pro-tem/ Speaker of the House	--------	Governance	36

Effective Date	Provision	Responsible Party	Affected Party	Part	Section
July 13, 1990	Alternative certification program is established.	Educ. Prof. Standards Bd.	Prospective teachers	Governance	58
July 13, 1990	Local districts to establish a process for waiving fees for low-income students.	Local districts	Low-income students	Governance	77
July 13, 1990	New provisions for school board candidates: --must hold a high school diploma or GED; --cannot have relatives employed by the school district; --cannot accept contributions of more than $100 from any individual, or more than $200 from any organization.	School board candidates	School board candidates	Governance	71, 73
July 13, 1990	School employees prohibited from participating in or contributing money to school board campaigns.	School employees	School employees/ school board	Governance	79
July 13, 1990	School boards are no longer responsible for--and are prohibited from influencing the hiring of--school employees.	--------	School boards	Governance	71, 74 183
July 13, 1990	Responsibility for all hiring, promotion, and transfer of school employees is placed solely with local superintendents(currently, local boards must approve such decisions).	Superintendents	School boards	Governance	78
July 13,1990	School boards required to consider recommendations of a screening committee prior to appointing a superintendent, and must obtain approval from chief state school officer before dismissing a superintendent.	School boards	School boards/ superintendents	Governance	75, 76
July 13, 1990	Local districts must establish a screening committee to screen applicants for superintendent within 30 days of notice of impending vacancy.	Local districts	Prospective superintendents	Governance	76
July 13, 1990	Chief state school officer takes over responsibility for filling local school board vacancies (local boards may make nominations).	Chief state school officer	School boards	Governance	70
July 13, 1990	New process for filling vacancies in local school districts is established.	Local districts/ superintendents/ chief state school officer	Prospective school employees	Governance	78
July 13, 1990	New procedure for terminating teacher contracts is established.	Superintendent/ chief state school officer	Teachers	Governance	85

Effective Date	Provision	Responsible Party	Affected Party	Part	Section
July 13, 1990	New process for revoking teachers' certificates takes effect.	Superintendents/ Educ. Prof. Standards Bd.	Teachers	Governance	64
July 13, 1990	Relatives of principals prohibited from working in same school, except current employees who are not the principals' spouse.	Superintendents	Relatives of school principals	Governance	78
July 13, 1990	Spouses of principals prohibited from working in same school, unless there is no other school in the district to which spouse can transfer.	Superintendents	Principals' spouses	Governance	78
July 13, 1990	Relatives of school board members prohibited from being employed by local district, except current employees who were not hired during the tenure of the related board member; --Relatives employed in the 1989-90 school year who were hired during the board member's tenure may continue employment during the remainder of the board member's term; --Relatives employed under these exemptions cannot be promoted.	Superintendents	Relatives of school board members	Governance	78
July 13, 1990	Office of Education Accountability established under LRC to monitor the process of school reform.	Legislative Research Commission (LRC)	Local Districts	Governance	92
July 13, 1990	Garage sales (and the like) will not be required to collect sales tax on up to $1000 (rather than the current $500) of sales.	--------	Individuals and non-profit organizations	Revenue	624
July 13, 1990	Slight increase in tax deduction to offset cost of sales tax increase (1.75% of first $1000 of tax due [as opposed to 2%], and 1.0% of tax due in excess of $100 [as opposed to .25%]).	Taxpayers	Taxpayers	Revenue	622
July 15, 1990	Education Professional Standards (EPS) Board established to oversee teacher training and certification.	Governor	Teachers/ teacher training programs.	Governance	56
July 15, 1990 (after this date)	EPS Board to adopt regulations for local district training programs for alternative certification of middle and high school teachers.	EPS Board	Prospective middle and high school teachers.	Governance	58
Oct. 1, 1990	Local equivalent tax rate (which produces up to 15% of SEEK) for 1991-92 school year must have been levied.	School boards	Taxpayers/ schools	Finance	107

Effective Date	Provision	Responsible Party	Affected Party	Part	Section
1990-91/ 1991-92	State must provide in-service to teachers covering certain topics relevant to the implementation of this act, and local districts must use their four designated days to cover the same topics.	State Board/ Local districts	Teachers	Curriculum	12
1990-91	Planning grants to be issued to local districts, and used in conjunction with other districts to plan professional development activities up through the 1994-95 school year.	Dept .of Education	Schools	Curriculum	13
1990-91	All districts will receive an 8% to 25% increase in state funding.	--------	Local districts	Finance	97
1990-91	All districts which have adequate facilities must provide preschool programs for all "at-risk" four-year-olds.	Local districts	Local districts/ Preschool children	Curriculum	16
1990-92 biennium	State Board must develop a Kentucky professional compensation plan to provide teachers with the opportunity to upgrade their salaries.	State Board	Teachers	Finance	99
Jan. 1, 1991	The Council on Education Technology must submit its five-year plan to the Legislative Research Commission.	Council on Ed. Tech.	Schools	Curriculum	22
Jan. 1, 1991	The Interagency Task Force on Family Resource Centers and Youth Services Centers must complete its five-year plan for the establishment of these centers.	Interagency Task Force	Schools/families/ students	Curriculum	18
Jan 1, 1991	Local boards must adopt a policy for implementing school-based decision making.	School boards	Schools/boards	Curriculum	14
Jan 1, 1991	Commissioner of Education becomes chief executive of the Dept. of Education, and responsible for its organization.	Commissioner of Ed.	Dept. of Education	Governance	43
Jan 1, 1991	First Commissioner of Education to assume the duties of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.	Education Management Selection Commission	Superintendent of of Public Instruction/	Governance	41
June 30, 1991	Commissioner of Education must recommend a method for funding continuing education.	Commissioner of Ed.	Schools/students	Curriculum	27

Effective Date	Provision	Responsible Party	Affected Party	Part	Section
June 30, 1991	All districts with enrollment of 20,000 or less must have joined a consortium involving two or more districts for the purpose of planning professional development.	Local Districts	Local districts/ teachers	Curriculum	13
June 30, 1991	Local districts must develop initial plans for family resource and youth services centers.	Local districts	Schools/families/ students	Curriculum	18
June 30, 1991	Each district, except those with only one school, must have at least one school which plans to implement school-based decision making the following school year.	School boards	Schools/boards	Curriculum	14
June 30, 1991	All positions in the Department of Education will be terminated.	Commissioner of Ed.	Dept. of Ed. employees	Governance	42
July 1, 1991	Commissioner of Education to establish all positions in the Dept. of Ed., and set qualifications.	Commissioner of Ed.	Dept. of Ed.	Governance	42
July, 1991	Education Professional Standards Board must adopt regulations creating a local district alternative training program for primary grade teachers.	EPS Board	Prospective Primary teachers	Governance	58
July 1, 1991	Kentucky Distinguished Educator program to be implemented.	State Board	Teachers/schools	Curriculum	6
July 1, 1991	All principals must have successfully completed the beginning teacher committee training program.	Principals	Principals	Governance	45
July 1, 1991	Relatives of superintendents can no longer be employed by the school district, except current certified employees, and spouses who have at least 20 years school service--but such spouses cannot hold supervisory positions.	Superintendents	Relatives of superintendents	Governance	78
July 1, 1991	State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education will be moved to a new section in the government organizational structure.	State Board	State Board	Noncodified Material	654
1991-92	All districts must provide preschool programs to all 3-5 year old handicapped children.	Local districts	Local districts/ Preschool handicapped children	Curriculum	17
1991-92	All districts must provide preschool programs to all at-risk 4-year-olds, and to other 4 year-olds, as space permits.	Local districts	Schools/preschool children	Curriculum	16

Effective Date	Provision	Responsible Party	Affected Party	Part	Section
1991-92	Interim testing program to begin.	State Board	Schools/students	Curriculum	4
1991-92	All districts will receive a 5% to 25% increase in state funding.	--------	Local districts	Finance	97
1991-92	The integrated technology-based communications system for reporting on school activities must be operational in all schools.	Council on Ed. Tech.	Schools	Curriculum	22
1991-92?	Department of Education must begin using the integrated communications system to conduct annual audits of all school districts.	Department of Education	Local districts	Finance	102
Oct. 1, 1991	Department of Education must develop specific weights for each category of exceptionality to be used in calculating the funding add-on factor for exceptional children.	Dept. of Education	Local districts	Finance	97
Oct. 1, 1991	The Office of Education Accountability (OEA) must examine the current system of allocating transportation funds, and recommend needed changes.	OEA Division of Finance	Local districts	Finance	97
Oct. 1, 1991	Division of Finance of the OEA must have reviewed weights for different program components of SEEK (developed by the Dept. of Ed.).	OEA	Local districts	Governance	92
Dec. 1, 1991	The Council on School Performance Standards must make its final report--which frames six student goals in measurable terms--to the Governor, LRC, and State Board.	Council on School Performance Standards	Schools/students	Curriculum	3
1991-92 thru 1994-95	Consortia will receive each participating district's professional development funds.	--------	Consortia/local districts	Curriculum	13
Jan. 1992	Commissioner of Education must establish job classification and minimum qualification for local district classified employees.	Commissioner of Ed.	Classified employees	Governance	54
Jan. 1992	Commissioner of Education must recommend raising the compulsory school age to 18 to the 1992 General Assembly.	Commissioner of Ed.	General Assembly/ students ages 16-17	Curriculum	29

Effective Date	Provision	Responsible Party	Affected Party	Part	Section
Jan. 1992	Education Professional Standards Board must submit recommendations to the 1992 General Assembly for increasing the number of minority teachers.	EPS Board	1992 General Assembly/Mihority teachers	Governance	56
Jan. 1, 1992	Regional service centers must be established throughout the state to provide professional development to school employees.	Commissioner of Ed.	School employees	Governance	44
Jan. 6, 1992	Salary of Superintendent of Public Instruction reduced to $3000 per year.	--------	Supt. of Public Instruction	Governance	40
June 30, 1992	Family resources and youth services centers must be established in or near at least 1/4 of eligible schools.	Local districts	Schools/families/ students	Curriculum	18
July 1, 1992	Job classification and minimum qualification standards, set by Commissioner for classified school employees, take effect.	Classified employees	Classified employees	Governance	54
July 1, 1992	Principals Assessment Center and Superintendents' Training Program and Assessment Center to be established.	Dept. of Educ.	Principals/ Superintendents	Governance	45
1992-93	The Kentucky Professional Compensation Plan will be implemented.	State Board	Teachers	Finance	99
1992-93	The nongraded primary program must be implemented.	State Board, Local districts	Local districts/ schools, primary teachers and students	Curriculum	31
1992-93	First five Kentucky Distinguished Educators will be recognized.	State Board	Teachers	Curriculum	6
June 30, 1993	Family Resource/Youth Services Centers to be expanded by 1/4 (or until all eligible schools are served).	Local Districts	Schools/families students	Curriculum	18
July 1, 1993	The State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education must provide a model curriculum framework which is tied to goals, outcomes, and assessment.	State Board	Schools/students	Curriculum	3
1993-94	First determination of school success.	State Board	Schools	Curriculum	4
June 30,1994	Family Resource/Youth Services Centers to be expanded by 1/4 (or until all eligible schools are served).	Local Districts	Schools/families students	Curriculum	18
July 1, 1994	All real property in the state must be assessed at 100% of fair cash value.	Property valuation administrators	Property owners/ schools	Finance	104
July 1, 1994	All principals and superintendents must have successfully completed the assessment center process.	Principals/ Superintendents	Principals/ Superintendents	Governance	45 & 46

Effective Date	Provision	Responsible Party	Affected Party	Part	Section
July 1, 1994	Continuing professional development requirements for superintendents take effect.	State Board	Superintendents	Governance	46
Prior to 1994-95 school year	State Board must review graduation requirements.	State Board	Graduating students	Curriculum	31
1994-95	SEEK program to be fully implemented.	--------	Local districts	Finance	97
June 30, 1995	Family Resource/Youth Services centers to be expanded by 1/4 (or until all eligible schools are served)	Local Districts	Schools/families students	Curriculum	18
July 1, 1995	Districts may withdraw from consortia.	Local Districts	Local districts	Curriculum	13
1995-96 year (at the latest)	New assessment program must be in place.	State Board	Schools, students	Curriculum	4
Dec. 31, 1995	Interagency Task Force on Family and Youth Centers will be disbanded.	--------	Interagency Task Force	Curriculum	18
July 1, 1996	All schools, except in districts with only one school, must implement school-based decision making.	School boards	Schools	Curriculum	14

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocols

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

SUPERINTENDENT/INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISOR

A. Background

1. Are you a native of this county?
   If so, did you attend the public schools here?
2. How long have you been employed in this school district?
   What role(s) did you play before assuming this position?
3. How long have you been employed in this position.

B. Views of Reform

1. Where have you obtained most of your information on the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA)?
2. Have these sources informed you adequately about KERA?
3. What is your overall reaction to KERA at this point?
   a. What are the most significant features of the law?
   b. What are the strong points?
   c. What are the weak points?
   d. What items do you think will be on the agenda when the General Assembly reconvenes in 1992?
   e. What would you like to know more about?

C. Local Implementation

1. How has KERA affected your district up to this point?
   [If necessary, ask about the following issues]:
   - o How much new money received?
   - o How will new money be spent?
   - o Any school board members/principals/superintendent affected by nepotism measures?
2. What is the district doing this year toward implementation of KERA?
   - o How much was the local tax rate increased?
   - o Preschool program this year?
   - o Any schools going to school-based decisionmaking (SBDM) this year?
   - o Any local involvement/participation on the various new, state-level commissions which have been created to study such issues as early childhood, family resource/youth services centers, technology, student skills?
   - o Inservice of KERA?
   - o Plans toward joining a professional development consortium?
   - o Plans for family resource/youth services centers?
   - o Plans for implementing the nongraded primary program ahead of schedule?
   - o Change instructional strategies in preparation for the new outcome-based approach?

3. Is there anything about this district which will make implementation of KERA (or of certain parts of KERA) especially easy or especially difficult?

D. Local Reaction

How do you think the following groups are reacting to KERA:

School board members	Central office staff	Principals
Teachers	Classified employees	Parents
Community	Local media	

E. Closing

1. Is there anything you would like to say about reform that we haven't yet touched on?
2. Is there anyone here in the district you think I should talk to about KERA?
3. Will there be any relevant meetings held in the district during the next month which we might attend, such as school board, central office staff, or principals' meetings?
4. Can you assist us in arranging to meet with your school board chairman and two other members?
5. Can you recommend three schools in the district--one at each level--which are fairly representative of the range of schools you have here, where we can spend a day interviewing staff? Will you notify the principals of these schools that we will be calling them?

EXCEPTIONAL CHILD EDUCATION SUPERVISOR

A. Background

1. Are you a native of this county?
   If so, did you attend the public schools here?
2. How long have you been employed in this school district?
   What role(s) did you play before assuming this position?
3. How long have you been employed in this position?

B. Views of Reform

1. Where have you obtained most of your information on the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA)?
2. Have these sources informed you adequately about KERA?
3. What is your overall reaction to KERA at this point?
   a. What are the most significant features of the law?
   b. What are the strong points?
   c. What are the weak points?
   d. What items do you think will be on the agenda when the General Assembly reconvenes in 1992?
   e. What would you like to know more about?
4. How do you think KERA will impact exceptional children?

C. Local Implementation

1. What plans/discussions/actions is the district taking this year toward providing for exceptional children as it moves toward implementing KERA? [If necessary, ask how the following features of KERA might include/affect exceptional children]:

Preschool program	Family resource and youth services center
Nongraded primary	Performance-based assessment
Outcome-based education	New money in the system

2. Is there anything about this district which will make implementation of KERA (or of certain parts of KERA) especially easy or especially difficult?

D. Local Reaction

How are special education teachers and parents of exceptional students reacting to KERA?

E. Closing

1. Is there anything you would like to say about reform that we haven't yet touched on?
2. Is there anyone here in the district you think I should talk to about KERA?

PRINCIPAL/OTHER ADMINISTRATOR AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

A. Background

1. Are you a native of this county?
   If so, did you attend the public schools here?
2. How long have you been employed in this school district?
   What role(s) did you play before assuming this position?
3. How long have you been employed in this position?

B. Views of Reform

1. Where have you obtained most of your information on the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA)?
2. Have these sources informed you adequately about KERA?
3. What is your overall reaction to KERA at this point?
   a. What are the most significant features of the law?
   b. What are the strong points?
   c. What are the weak points?
   d. What items do you think will be on the agenda when the General Assembly reconvenes in 1992?
   e. What would you like to know more about?

C. Local Implementation

1. How has KERA affected your school up to this point?
   [Nepotism measures? New money?]
2. What is the school/district doing this year toward implementation of KERA?
   [Preschool? SBDM? Inservice? Nongraded primary? Changing instructional/assessment strategies?]
3. Is there anything about this school or district which will make implementation of KERA (or of certain parts of KERA) especially easy or especially difficult?

D. Location Reaction

1. How is the school staff reacting to the reforms?
2. How about parents and students?
3. How do you think the community in general is reacting?

E. Closing

1. Is there anything you would like to say about reform that we haven't yet touched on?
2. Is there anyone here in the district you think I should talk to about KERA?

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

A. Background

1. Are you a native of this county?
   If so, did you attend the public schools here?
2. How long have you been on the school board?
3. What was your involvement with the school district prior to serving on the board?

B. Views of Reform

1. Where have you obtained most of your information on the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA)?
2. Have these sources informed you adequately about KERA?
3. What is your overall reaction to KERA at this point?
   a. What are the most significant features of the law?
   b. What are the strong points?
   c. What are the weak points?
   d. What items do you think will be on the agenda when the General Assembly reconvenes in 1992?
   e. What would you like to know more about?

C. Local Implementation

1. How has KERA affected the district this year?
2. What plans does the school board have for implementing KERA in future years?
3. Is there anything about this district which will make implementation of KERA (or of certain parts of KERA) especially easy or especially difficult?

D. Location Reaction

1. How do you think the community is reacting to the reforms?
2. How about school district personnel?

E. Closing

1. Is there anything you would like to say about reform that we haven't yet touched on?
2. Is there anyone here in the district you think I should talk to about KERA?

TEACHERS

A. Background

1. Are you a native of this county?
   If so, did you attend the public schools here?
2. How long have you been employed in this school district?
   What role(s) did you play before assuming this position?
3. How long have you been employed in this position?

B. Views of Reform

1. Where have you obtained most of your information on the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA)?
2. Have these sources informed you adequately about KERA?
3. What is your overall reaction to KERA at this point?
   a. What are the most significant features of the law?
   b. What are the strong points?
   c. What are the weak points?
   d. What items do you think will be on the agenda when the General Assembly reconvenes in 1992?
   e. What would you like to know more about?

C. Effects of KERA on Teachers

1. How has KERA affected you up to this point?
2. What features of KERA do you think will impact most heavily on classroom teachers?
3. How will KERA change what classroom teachers are doing?
4. What is your district/school doing this year to prepare to implement KERA?
5. What should they be doing?
6. Is there anything about this school or district which will make implementation of KERA (or of certain parts of KERA) especially easy or especially difficult?

D. Location Reaction

1. How do you think the district leadership is reacting to KERA?
2. How about your fellow teachers?
3. Parents and students?
4. The community in general?

E. Closing

1. Is there anything you would like to say about reform that we haven't yet touched on?
2. Is there anyone here in the district you think I should talk to about KERA?

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES

A. Background

1. Are you a native of this county?
   If so, did you attend the public schools here?
2. How long have you been employed in this school district?
   What role(s) did you play before assuming this position?
3. How long have you been employed in this situation?

B. Views of Reform

1. Where have you obtained most of your information on the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA)?
2. Have these sources informed you adequately about KERA?
3. What is your overall reaction to KERA at this point?
   a. What are the most significant features of the law?
   b. What are the strong points?
   c. What are the weak points?
   d. What items do you think will be on the agenda when the General Assembly reconvenes in 1992?
   e. What would you like to know more about?

C. Local Implementation

1. How has KERA affected you up to this point?
   [Nepotism measures? New money?]
2. What features of KERA do you think will impact most heavily on classified employees?
3. What is the school/district doing this year to prepare to implement the reforms?
4. What should they be doing?
5. Is there anything about this school or district which will make implementation of KERA (or of certain parts of KERA) especially easy or especially difficult?

D. Local Reaction

1. How do you think the district leadership is reacting to the reforms?
2. How about other classified employees?
3. Parents and students?
4. The community in general?

E. Closing

1. Is there anything you would like to say about reform that we haven't yet touched on?
2. Is there anyone here in the district you think I should talk to about KERA?

APPENDIX C

State-Level Contacts Who Advised Researchers

STATE-LEVEL CONTACTS WHO ADVISED RESEARCHERS

State Government Officials
(Frankfort, KY)

Office of the Governor
- Jack D. Foster, Ph.D., Secretary, Education and Humanities Cabinet

Kentucky General Assembly
- Representative Don Blandford, Speaker, Kentucky House of Representatives
- Senator John A. "Eck" Rose, President Pro-Tempore, Kentucky State

Kentucky Department of Education
- Dr. Dan Branham, Deputy Superintendent, Research and Planning
- Dr. H. M. Snodgrass, Associate Superintendent, Office of Research and Planning
- Dr. Lynn Fluegge, Division of Research, Office of Research and Planning
- Bob Coakley, Division of School District Finance, Office of School Administration and Finance

Professional Organizations

Kentucky Education Association (KEA) (Frankfort, KY)
- David Allen, President
- Marnel Moorman, Vice President
- Charlie Vice, Executive Director
- Sharon Felty-Comer, Assistant Executive Director, Programs
- Gretchen Lampe, Research Specialist

Citizens' Groups

Forward in the Fifth (Berea, KY)
- Ginny Eager, Local Affiliate Coordinator

The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence (Lexington, KY)
- Dr. Robert F. Sexton, Executive Director
- Cindy Heine, Associate Executive Director

University Officials

University of Kentucky (Lexington, KY)
- Alan DeYoung, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation, College of Education
- Jane Bagby, Assistant Director, Appalachian Center